

THE THANE SLUG



One of the more interesting items to come to our attention is what we have come to call the “Thane Slug.” Owned by Richard Reisinger, it makes claims to being a very significant piece of Alaska numismatics. But is it?

In preparing this article to accompany the listing of Alaska gold and platinum medals found on the inside pages, I visited the Alaskana room of the Rasmussen Library at the University of Alaska. While my research was not extensive, any reference to the Alaska Gold Mines Co. in Thane is conspicuous by its absence.

The medal claims to be “Gold from First Mill Run” of the Alaska Gold Mines Co. on March 1st, 1915. Thane is located about four miles south east of Juneau on the Gastineau Channel. In searching the contemporary

newspapers from the Juneau area, there is no mention of this event, or of Alaska Gold Mines Co.

In Bulletin 642 of the United States Geological Survey, Mineral Resources of Alaska, Report on Progress of Investigations in 1915 by Alfred H. Brook and others, the mining activity at Thane is noted on page 75:

“The most notable achievement of the year was the completion of the new Alaska-Gastineau mill at Thane, near the mouth of Sheep Creek. The mill was designed to treat 6,000 tons daily, but tests show that it is capable of handling 8,000 to 10,000 tons. It is a concentrating plant that produces four grades of concentrate for shipment to smelters.

“The first unit of the mill was completed in February, and during the year the output gradually increased to nearly full capacity.”

So, there was a mill coming into production at that time. But is this medal from the gold from that mill?

The medal is 31mm in diameter. I failed to keep my specific gravity computations, which would have the weight. However, the specific gravity of this medal is only about 13.6. This is roughly equivalent to a commercial 14K alloy of 58.3% gold, 10% silver, 29.7% copper and 2% zinc that has a specific gravity of 13.22. Is this a fineness that we could expect from a mill run that is producing concentrate for shipment to smelters?



continued on page 45.

EDITORIAL

It is frustrating to research an item and not be able to find the information one is looking for. In the case of the Thane Slug, we have a very interesting piece, but the research just raises more questions. We would hope that someone with more time and access to historical data can expand upon what we have found.

Also in this issue is our listing of Alaska gold and platinum medals. Some information is lacking, and we would like to hear from anyone that can add to the data.

The first three pages of this issue were composed on Adobe PageMaker 6.5. My wife is leading me kicking and screaming into new technology. While I am very comfortable with WordPerfect, I am told that PM is more versatile. Time will tell if I can adjust to this new program.

We are in need of articles that focus on Alaska numismatics. We have several that we can run of non-Alaska interest. We would prefer to emphasize Alaska, but we can't do it on our own! If you have information to share, it need not be in article form. We can take your raw information, and turn it into an article.

It has been a very busy summer. We visited Kenton again in July with positive results. If any of you know of a family in crisis with a teen out of control, we have great confidence in this program. Please contact us (907) 452-6461 days, (907) 479-3259 evenings and Sunday. Don't wait until it is too late.

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, published 10 times per year, is a publication of Alaska Rare Coins. All articles remain the property of the authors and may not be reprinted without their consent.

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Subscription Rates: (all first class or airmail)

United States -	\$15 per year
Canada -	\$18 per year
Elsewhere -	\$35 per year

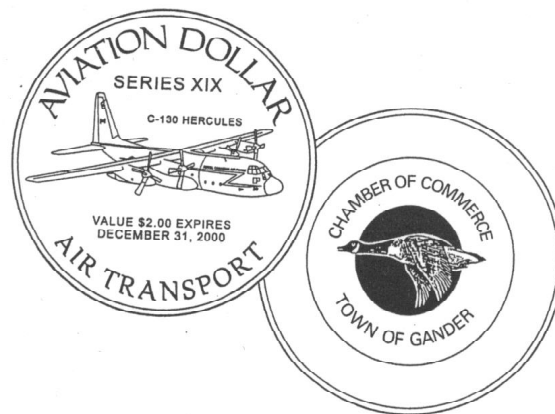
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GANDER \$2 TOKEN



The 19th annual series of municipal trade tokens, featuring well known types of aircraft that have refueled at Gander, Newfoundland, was issued in the spring of 2000 by the Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce.

A side view of a Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft is featured on the obverse side. The C-130 has been in production of four decades. The aircraft was designed by Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Burbank, California. The Hercules was the answer to a request by the U.S. government for a military aircraft capable of operating from rough, dirt strips for the transportation of troops and equipment. The first prototype flew in August 1954, and the first production aircraft were delivered to the USAF Tactical Air Command in December 1956. Approximately 2,100 have been produced in eight different versions, serving with 60 air forces. It became the work horse of civilian cargo transport world wide, even doing duty during the construction of the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline in the 1970s (featured on the 1976 D one ounce silver pipeline medal).

The reverse pictures the logo of Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce. The token was designed by Doug Seaward.

The \$2.00 trade token was struck by Lawrence Medallie Art of Etobicoke, Ontario. 5,000 were struck on 33mm nickel bonded steel blanks (\$2.75). Of these, 500 were gold plated (\$9.95). They are available postpaid, at the prices in () from Gander & Area Chamber of Commerce, 109 Trans Canada Highway, Gander, Newfoundland, Canada A1V 1P6. A price list of back issues and a brochure containing descriptive data on the aircraft depicted on each of Gander's Aviation Dollars are available free of charge.

My thanks to the Gander & Area Chamber of commerce for the data on the Hercules aircraft.

-Jerry Remick

THANE SLUG, CONT.

An examination of the engraving on the reverse (below) in comparison with contemporary post cards reveals that the



image on the medal closely matches those on the post cards. In looking at views of the Alaska-Gastineau mine on old post cards, we note that many times they are identified only as Thane. On others it is identified as the A-G mine.

On one card, the photo is identified as “Alaska Gold Mills, Sheep Creek, Alaska.” Sheep Creek was renamed Thane in 1914. This photo could have been taken before the town was renamed Thane, and before the mill was operational. At that point in its history, it may have been referred to by the generic name of Alaska Gold Mill.

Our listing of Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds shows that Alaska Gastineau Mining Co. was incorporated in New York in 1912. Alaska Gold Mines Co. was incorporated in Maine, also in 1912. Unfortunately, we can draw no conclusions from this information.

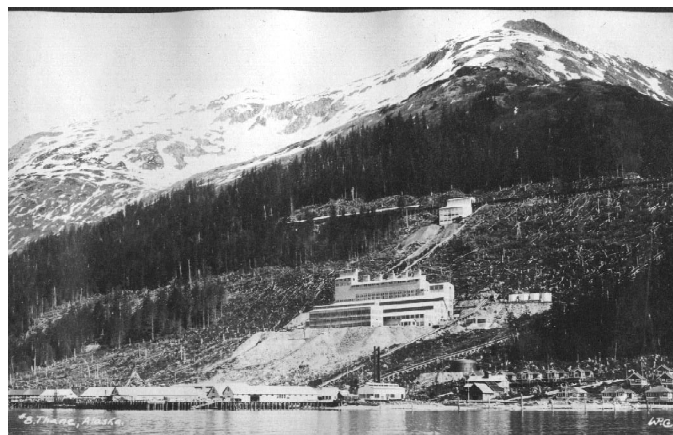
By 1915, the name Alaska Gastineau Mining Company should have been well established. This is the only mining company listed in Polk’s Directory for Thane. But one must keep in mind that for businesses, Polk’s is a paid listing. If the business did not buy advertising, they were not listed.

We have a lot of inconclusive evidence. We can’t find Alaska Gold Mines Co. in Thane.

So how does one account for the discrepancy in the name

on the medal? At this time we can only speculate. Let’s look at what we do know.

The Alaska Gastineau mill had its first run at some time in 1915. March 1 does not seem out of line from what we have learned. The engraving on the medal does not leave



any doubt that it is the Alaska Gastineau Mining Company’s mill at Thane.

If the medal were made from gold from the first run of this mill, the person responsible should have been involved enough with the operation to know the correct name of the company operating the mill.

So we are left to make one of two assumptions: 1) it is an engraver’s error, due to lack of knowledge; 2) it is a fabrication based upon faulty information. We have no way to discuss the first possibility. However, we can examine a scenario that could result in the second.

An engraver with the following information, and one assumption could produce the medal we are discussing. All the information is provided in this article: a) a post card or photo of the mill, with the caption “A.G. Mines, Thane.”; b) the date of the first mill run (exact date not determined in the article), perhaps on the same post card. The one assumption, and it is quite logical, is that the “G” was for Gold.

I lean to an engraver’s error. However, in my mind, the most troubling aspect is that this mill was producing concentrate for shipment to smelter. Is the fineness of the medal indicative of this concentrate? Would a mill producing concentrate even turn out any product that could be melted into a disc so that some one could commemorate the first mill run? These are questions that we cannot answer.

ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS

by
Jerry Cleworth & Dick Hanscom

Alaska was built on gold. The discovery of gold brought thousands of prospectors north, looking for instant riches. It would be appropriate that Alaska should have a numismatic history rich in gold. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Alaska gold medals are of relatively recent issue.

This past December, we embarked on a project to collect information on all known Alaska gold and platinum medals. We consulted all the references on Alaska medals and contacted collectors for their input. This report is the result of that research. We would like to thank Kaye Dethridge, Kurtis Hawk, Roy Brown and Mike Roebuck for their assistance. This listing disregards the small Alaska gold tokens. The Pinch, Parka Head, TooWah and Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition series of gold tokens were issued for sale at world's fairs and expositions, and have little or no real connection with Alaska.

It is interesting to note that several gold items were issued during the "gold prohibition" years. One must wonder how the organizations issuing the medals got around this restriction. Perhaps they were "jewelry." The only official United States Mint medal for Alaska, noting the centennial of the purchase of Alaska from Russia, could not be struck in gold. They were minted in silver bronze and platinum.



1) 1959 Statehood medal.

63mm, approximately 6.3 oz., 100 minted by Medallie Art Co. of New York. These were authorized by the State Legislature (Senate Concurrent Resolution #5). We have seen numbers 11, 56 and 61.

Obv: Alaska map superimposed on U.S. map.

Rev: State Seal.

Sources: Listed on page 6 of Gould/Bressett/Dethridge (GBD)

ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

2) 1959 Statehood Medal

30mm, 24 struck in 18kt gold by Heraldic Arts Co., Rochester, NY.

Obv: "Alaska Admitted To The Union, 1959," with Alaska flag.

Rev: William Seward.

Sources: Listed on page 7 of GBD.



3) 1959 Alaska/Hawaii Statehood

40mm, 25 struck in 10kt rose gold, numbered on the edge 1-25, privately issued by Clifford Mishler

Obv: Map of Alaska

Rev: Map of Hawaii

Sources: Listed in Hibler & Kappen "So-Called Dollars"



4) 1960 Alaska Festival of Music

39mm, 2 presentation pieces in gold (fineness unknown)

Obv: Hands conducting over mountains, "Alaska Festival of Music, 1960."

Rev: State Seal.

Source: Rubles to Statehood, GBD



5) 1962 Alaska Native Brotherhood

39mm, 4 struck in gold (fineness unknown).

Obv: Totem designs, "Alaska Native Brotherhood 1912-1962."

Rev: ANB monogram, "Golden Anniversary" in arrow.

Source: Kurtis Hawk.



6) 1963 Sitka Chamber of Commerce Trade Dollar

40mm, 4 struck in 18kt gold.

Obv: Three portraits (Seward, Baranof, Katlean) and "Alaska's Historical Capital, To Know Alaska, One Must First Know Sitka."

Rev: Trade dollar statement

Sources: Listed on page 173 of GBD.



7) 1963 North Star Enterprises.

40mm, one struck in gold and given to Gov. Eagan at the inauguration of the Alaska Marine Highway.

Obv: Map of Alaska

Rev: "Cheechako \$2 Grubstake...Redeemable for one Alaska Gold Nugget."

Sources: Listed on page 171 of GBD.



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.



8) 1964 Alaska Earthquake.

50mm, proposed 25 pieces in platinum (none seen), serial numbered. Designed by Luther Thomas, minted by Vanguard Medals of New York.

Obv. Map of Alaska with various locations affected by the earthquake shown, "Alaska Earthquake, Good Friday March 27, 1964, 5:45PM."

Rev. Biblical quote (St. Matt. 27:51-54) in wreath.

Sources: July 1964 of "The Numismatist", "Numismatic Scrapbook" or "World Coins."

9) 1965 Fairbanks Coin Club, First State Coin Convention.

These were issued in silver and bronze, but one was struck in gold (unauthorized). This was recovered by the club and sold at auction.

Obv: Circumpolar map, "Farthest North Coin Club, First Annual State Coin Convention."

Rev: Gold panner, "Fairbanks, Golden Heart of Alaska."

Source: Dick Hanscom



10) 1967 Alaska Purchase Centennial

Platinum. 32mm with 1.2931 oz., Authorized by Congress, Public Law 89-393. 100 were minted by the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. They were sold through the Alaska Purchase Centennial Commission, with the bronze and silver for \$500, and were numbered. Designed by Joan Kickbush of Anchorage and Alice Cook of Juneau.

Obv: Sourdough at center, "North to the Future 1867-1967, Alaska Purchase Centennial"

Rev: Purchase Centennial Totem center, "Alaska Purchase Centennial, 1867-1967."

Sources: ATC&PN, 2/89



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

11) 1974-1977 Trans-Alaska Pipeline Medal Set.

A 12 piece set similar to the silver set.

These were struck in 22kt (sets number 20 and 21 verified) and also in either 14kt or 18kt. #1 or 12 illustrated.



12) circa 1976 Alaska Gold & Silver Mint (Anchorage)

Owned by Frank Tolley. Reportedly struck 1 and ½ ounce gold (no illustration).

13) 1976 Nyac Gold Medal.

38mm, numbered on the edge, .999 pure.

1 troy ounce. Limited to 1,000 but all seen have been numbered under 100.

The gold for these medals was mined by the dredge Nyak #4 in the upper Tuluksak drainage system

(Aniak and Bethel recording district).

Obv: Map of Alaska with Nyac and Alaska on the map. "Sourdough Centennial, 1976."

Rev: Bucket line on dredge, "Nyac, One Troy Ounce Fine Gold."



14) 1976 "Carl Parker" Gold Medal.

39mm, 1 oz. 999.5 Fine. Minted by Parker Industries (no relation to Carl Parker) under the name of Northwest Territorial Mint in Washington state. Carl Parker was a local Fairbanksan who sold many of these in the late seventies.

Obv: Money Knob (a hill near Livengood, AK), "Northwest Territorial Mint, one troy ounce gold, 999.5 Fine"

Rev: Eagle (similar to Morgan Dollar) at center, "United States of America, 200 Years, 1776-1976." Sources: ATC&PN 10/95.



15) 1976 "Bobby Miller" or "Tofty" Medal.

32mm, 1 oz. .999+ Fine. Bobby Miller was a local Fairbanks gold miner.

Obv: Map of Alaska with many place names, "Man Mining Company, Manley Hot Springs, Alaska 99756, Pure Alaska Placer Gold, Tofty, Alaska, One Troy Ounce .999+ Fine."

Rev: Eagle (similar to Washington Quarter) at center, "United States of America, 1976, In Gold We Trust."

Source: ATC&PN 10/95



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

16) 1976 Adak U.S. Bicentennial

Approximately 38mm, 7 in 18Kt. gold. Minted by Allan Johnson.

Obv: Map, flag, military portrait, "Protecting our heritage of Freedom, Adak, Alaska."

Rev: Eagle flying over island mountains.

Source: Coin World, Charles E. Fifield, John T. Beckman



17) 1977 Trans Alaska Pipeline

34mm, 18KT gold, projected mintage of 200.

Designed by George Hawkins, minted in Auckland, New Zealand.

Obv: Alaskan native and map, "World's largest privately financed project, Costing over eight billion dollars."

Rev: Trans Alaska Pipeline 800 miles Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, Completion date 1977.



18) 1977 Golden Weld

24mm, 10kt gold, about 1/25 ounce of gold.

Possibly 2,500 struck.

Obv: Two welders welding below the pipe

Rev: "Golden Weld, Completed on the Trans Alaska Pipeline May 30th, 1977 Limited Edition, 10KT."



19) 1978 "Bobby Miller" or "Tofty" Medal.

32mm, 1 oz. .999+ Fine. Some are numbered.

Bobby Miller was a local Fairbanks gold miner.

Obv: As 1976 Bobby Miller medal.

Rev: Two eagles in flight at center, ".999+ Pure Gold, One Troy Ounce, 1978."

Source: ATC&PN 10/95.



20) 1978 Captain Cook Bicentennial Medal

1 oz. gold, no information, no illustration.

Source: Dick Hanscom, seen at the same time originally saw Nyac medal.

21) (1980) Placer Miners of Alaska, Inc.

39mm, (one ounce pure gold). Minted by World Wide Mint, 50 in 1980 and 50 in 1987.

Obv: Miner with hydraulic Giant, "Placer Miners of Alaska, Inc., Est. 1976."

Rev: Lengthy list of placer strikes at center, "The Alaskan Placer Gold Strikes, Placer Miners of Alaska, Inc., Est. 1976."

Source: ATC&PN 10/95, 1/98.



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

22) 1985 Purchase of the Alaska Railroad

39mm, 1 oz. .999 Fine Gold. Minted to the order of Alaska Rare Coins. Limited to 100, only 48 were struck to customer's order, with selected serial numbers. Not sequentially numbered, 1-100.

Obv: Diesel Engine #1500 at center, "Alaska Railroad, Purchased by the State of Alaska, January 5, 1985."

Rev: Denali at center, "The Great Land, Denali, One Troy Oz. Gold, .999 Pure."

Sources: Jerry Cleworth



23) (1986) University of Alaska Museum Woolly Mammoth

39mm, 1 oz. .999 Fine Gold. Struck for the University of Alaska Museum by Alaska Rare Coins. Only 39 were minted, but authorization was much higher. Non-sequentially numbered, the highest number is 75. Of these, the first 9 or 10 were struck from a different obverse die with a somewhat incorrect depiction of the mammoth. Numbered beneath the mammoth on the obverse. Designed by Jim Belke.

Obv: Mammoth at center, "University of Alaska Museum, Preserving Alaska's Heritage."

Rev: Seal of the University of Alaska.

Sources: Jerry Cleworth



24) (1987) Red Dog Mine

39mm, Undated, unknown number in gold (\$990), 4 in platinum. Designed by Joseph De Silva.

Obv: Dog riding whale, "Red Dog Mine, Alaska."

Rev: Map of the Bering Sea area with "Red Dog Mine" in an arrow. Dog riding whale.



25) 1988 Red Dog Mine

39mm, 8 gold (\$971). Designed by Joseph De Silva

Obv: Dog riding whale, "Red Dog Mine, Alaska." (different from the 1987 issue).

Rev: Map of the Bering Sea area with "Red Dog Mine" in an arrow. Dog riding whale.



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

26) (1988) University of Alaska Museum Riverboat Nenana

39mm, 1 oz. .999 Fine Gold. Struck for the University of Alaska Museum by Alaska Rare Coins. Only 20 were struck to order with non-sequential serial numbers, the highest being #100, the lowest #2. Designed by Jim Belke.

Obv: Riverboat Nenana at center, "University of Alaska Museum."

Rev: Seal of the University of Alaska.

Sources: Jerry Cleworth



27) 1989 Red Dog Mine

39mm, 8 gold (\$971). Designed by Joseph De Silva

Obv: Dog, bird in air, "Red Dog Mine, Alaska."

Rev: Map of the Bering Sea area with "Red Dog Mine" in an arrow. Dog riding whale.



28) circa 1989, Gold Elongateds by Bert Samsa

24K, rolled on Franklin Mint Presidential medals.

Approximately 9 pieces. No illustration.

Obv: Uniface with Alaskan themes.

Rev: A faint trace of the host medal can be seen.



29) 1989 Alaska Miners Association

One Troy ounce, 30mm, minted by Sunshine.

Specimen examined was #62

Obv: Alaska Miners Association, Fifty Years, 1939-1989, gold panner.

Rev: Miners at sluice, .999 fine gold one troy ounce.



30) 1990 Little Creek Mine, Ophir, Alaska.

39mm, 1.5 ounces, .999 Fine. Projected mintage,

250, approximately 100 minted. Price - NY Spot x 1.5 plus \$90.

Obv: Dragline, "Little Creek Mine, Est. 1908, Ophir, Alaska."

Rev: Goldpanner, "North to the Future."

Sources: Kurtis Hawk



31) 1991 Friendship Dollar

Size unknown, presumably about 39mm, 1.5 ounces. Issued by the Alaska Geographic Society at \$750 with a limit of 250.

Obv: Vitus Bering Landing, ship and mountains.

Rev: In People We Trust, One Friendship Dollar, Map of Alaska and eastern Siberia.



32) 1993 Cassiterite Placer, Inc.

32mm, 1 oz. .9999 Fine gold.

Obv: Detailed map of Alaska at center, "Cassiterite Placer, Inc., Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701, Pure Alaska Placer Gold, Fox, Alaska, One Troy Ounce, .9999 Fine."

Rev: Eagle (similar to Washington Quarter) at center, United States of America, 1993, In Gold We Trust."



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

ALASKA MINT:

IDITAROD

Alaska Mint, 1.25 oz. Gold

1996	24
1997	25
1998	26
1999	27

Also, (50) ½ ounce and (100) 1/20 ounce each year since 1996.

FUR RENDEZVOUS

1986 1 oz. and ½ ounce, approximately 20 of each

1991-date 1 oz., about 10 per year. Also ½ and 1/20 ounce starting about 1994 or 1995

Also odd Alaska Railroad and White Pass & Yukon Railroad medals struck on request, usually 1.25 ounces using same dies as silver. Also private issue struck in gold.

OFFICIAL STATE MEDALS IN GOLD

1989 Alaska Precious Metals. Eskimo face design.

1 oz.	161
1 oz. Proof	71
½ oz.	49
¼ oz.	103
1/10 oz.	217



1990 Alaska Precious Metals. Puffin design.

1 oz.	25
1 oz. Proof	17
1/10 oz.	120



1991 Alaska Precious Metals. Design unknown, none known to exist.

1992 Anchorage Mint. Eagle design.

1 oz.	25
½ oz.	11
1/10 oz.	150



1993 Anchorage Mint. Wolf design.

1 oz.	77
½ oz.	49
1/10 oz.	298



1994 Anchorage Mint. Bear design.

1 oz.	155
½ oz.	85
1/10 oz.	500



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

OFFICIAL STATE MEDALS IN GOLD, CONT.

1995 Anchorage Mint. Puffin design

1 oz.	195
1/2 oz.	140
1/10 oz.	625



1996 Alaska Mint. Caribou design

1 oz.	155
1/2 oz.	116
1/10 oz.	497
1/20 oz.	220



1997 Alaska Mint. Musk Ox design.

1 oz.	150
1/2 oz.	150
1/10 oz.	270
1/20 oz.	185



1998 Alaska Mint. Moose design.

1 oz.	198
1/2 oz.	102
1/10 oz.	331
1/20 oz.	226



1999 Alaska Mint. Dall Sheep design.

3 oz.	19
1 oz.	187
1/2 oz.	106
1/10 oz.	239
1/20 oz.	148



2000 Alaska Mint. Red Fox design.

3 oz.	
1 oz.	
1/2 oz.	
1/10 oz.	
1/20 oz.	



FRANKLIN MINT PRODUCTS:

A) Statehood Series?

32mm, 25 platinum
Obv: William H. Seward
Rev: State Seal

B) National Commemorative Society

39mm, 3 platinum
Obv: William H. Seward, Alaska Centennial
Rev: "Wilderness, Exploration, Statehood, Growth"
Source: Kurtis Hawk; Guidebook of F M Issues.



ALASKA GOLD & PLATINUM MEDALS, CONT.

FRANKLIN MINT ISSUES, CONT.

C) History of the United States

44mm, one platinum; 13mm 24KT gold,
63 pieces.

- a) Obv: 1867, Alaska Purchase
Rev: Legend with important events of
1867
- b) Obv: 1897, Gold Seekers head to Klondike
Rev: Legend with important events of
1897
- c) Obv: 1959, Alaska and Hawaii admitted to
the Union
Rev: Legend with important events of
1959



D) States of the Union

32mm, 10 Platinum; 10mm, 45 platinum
Obv: State map, Land of Midnight Sun
Rev: Wreath, Forget-me-not

E) State Capitals Series

39mm, 25 serially numbered platinum
Obv: Alaska State Capital
Rev: State Seal

F) Gold Mine Ingot Series

9.9mm by 18.6mm, 24Kt, 40 Grains,
3,478 minted
Obv: Nome Unit
Rev: Map with location

LATE ADDITION:

A1) 1937 Independence Mine

Scalloped, 25mm with loop.

Obv: Mine scene.

Rev: First Virgin Gold, 1937, from
Independence Mine Alaska
Alaska-Pacific-Mines, Inc.
(Hatcher Pass)

Source: Alan Weinberg



REFERENCES:

Alaska's Coinage Through the Years by Maurice M. Gould, Kenneth Bressett and Kaye & Nancy Dethridge, 1965.

Rubbles to Statehood by Kay Fernald and Kay McDowell, 1965.

So-Called Dollars by Harold E. Hibler and Charles V. Kappen, 1963.

Guidebook of Franklin Mint Issues by Chester L. Krause, 1982.

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, various issues.